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REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are currently pending in the subject application and are presently under consideration. A marked-up version of all pending claims is found at pages 2-6 of this Reply. Claims 1, 3-20, 22, 24, and 25 have been amended herein. Claims 2, 21, and 23 have been cancelled herein.

Applicants' representative acknowledges with appreciation the Examiner indicating that claims 2, 3, 10, 18, 19, 22, and 23 would be allowed if recast in independent form so as to include the limitations of respective base claim(s) and any intervening claims. Independent claim 1 has been amended herein to incorporate the allowable aspects of allowable claim 2. Independent claim 20 has been amended herein to incorporate the allowable aspects of allowable dependent claim 23 and intervening dependent claim 21. Independent claim 24 has been amended herein to incorporate allowable aspects as indicated by the Examiner. Therefore, it is believed that claims 1, 3-20, 22, and 24 are now in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration of the subject patent application is respectfully requested in view of the comments and amendments herein.

**I. Rejection of Claims 1, 4-9, 11-17, 20, 21, and 24 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)**

Claims 1, 4-9, 11-17, 20, 21, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Hause *et al.* (US Patent 6,166,354). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons. Hause *et al.* does not disclose each and every element as set forth in independent claims 1, 20, and 24 of the subject application.

"A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ 2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the...claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989).



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The present invention relates to a system that facilitates monitoring sheet resistivity of a layer on a wafer in order to control rapid thermal annealing (RTA) process(es). Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite "one or more *sheet resistivity analyzing components adapted to analyze the sheet resistivity of one or more portions of the silicide layer* upon which the RTA components can perform RTA..."

Claim 24 has been amended in similar fashion to recite the aspect of a *silicide layer*. As indicated by the Examiner, the prior art of record does not disclose the allowable aspect of a *silicide layer*.

Independent claim 20 has been amended to recite the allowable aspects of "storing at least one of the sheet resistivity measurements, the feedback information, RTA time parameters, RTA heat parameters, layer composition, wafer size, wafer composition, wafer supplier, processing stage data, RTA chamber data and sheet resistivity chamber data in a data store; and monitoring at least one of the sheet resistivity measurements, the feedback information, RTA time parameters, RTA heat parameters, layer composition, wafer size, wafer composition, wafer supplier, processing stage data, RTA chamber data and sheet resistivity chamber data and producing at least one of a productivity report, an error report and a maintenance schedule." *Hause et al.* fails to disclose such aspects of the present invention as recited in independent claims 1, 20, and 24.

*Hause et al.* describes a system wherein surface photovoltage (SPV) is measured to determine whether an RTA process is complete. As indicated by the Examiner in the Office Action Dated October 22, 2003, the aspects recited above are not disclosed by the prior art. Thus, *Hause et al.* does not disclose each and every element of the present invention as set forth in the subject claims.

Thus, it is readily apparent that *Hause et al.* does not anticipate or make obvious the subject invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 20, and 24, (and claims 4-9 and 11-17, which depend respectively there from). Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.



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**II. Rejection of Claims 25 and 26 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)**

Claims 25 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Spraggins *et al.* (US Patent 5,466,484). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons. Spraggins *et al.* does not disclose each and every element as set forth in independent claim 25 of the subject application.

Independent claim 25 has been amended herein to recite "A *data packet transmittable between two or more processes*, the data packet containing information related to sheet resistivity measurements." The Examiner remarked in the Office Action Dated October 22, 2003, that the recitation "adapted to" perform a function is not a positive limitation in a patentable sense. Claim 25 has been amended herein to eliminate the phrase "adapted to." Spraggins *et al.* does not disclose each and every element set forth in amended independent claim 25.

The Examiner relies on Figure 6 of Spraggins *et al.* to anticipate the claimed data packet. Figure 6 of Spraggins *et al.* is merely a line-graph that plots sheet resistivity on the ordinate against anneal temperature on the abscissa. Neither Figure 6 nor the associated text in Spraggins *et al.* discloses a data packet for transmission between a plurality of processes.

In view of at least the above, it is readily apparent that Spraggins *et al.* does not anticipate applicants' invention as recited in independent claim 25 (and claim 26, which depends there from). Therefore, this rejection should be withdrawn.



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CONCLUSION

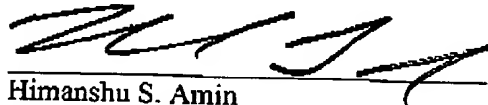
The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the above comments and amendments. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

In the event any fees are due in connection with this document, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1063.

Should the Examiner believe a telephone interview would be helpful to expedite favorable prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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